

Government and Law

for bullets is made in the body. If four men have fired and but three bullets are found, any one of them may be innocent of the death. If each can get twenty-four con-jurors to swear innocence with him, all secure acquittal. Any who cannot find twenty-four con-jurors are guilty and owe blood. If there are as many bullets as men, then all owe blood.

For killing a woman, which is a rare thing, blood may be taken. If she is unmarried, it is taken by her father's family; usually by her brother. If married, her father's family may take blood for her within the year. After that only her husband's family has the right to do so. Blood-gelt, if any, for a woman is very small. The tribe does not punish the murderer; it is purely a family affair. The death of a woman does not weaken the tribe, for she is of another blood and can easily be replaced from without; whereas a man cannot be replaced.

If a pregnant woman be killed two bloods can be claimed. Dom Kol Ashti told me that cases have occurred even in which a grave has been opened to settle the question of blood-gelt for the unborn child, and full payment claimed if it proved to be a male.

Cases in which killing is justified and is not punishable.—1. Blood may be taken for rape and none may be taken in return.

2. If the relatives of the man who is shot succeed in taking blood at once, shoot the murderer that day, the blood is laid and no more can be taken.

3. A woman taken in adultery may be killed along with her partner by her husband or brother, and no punishment follows. But should her husband kill her and not the man, her family can take blood for her.

In none of the above cases, I believe, does the tribe punish; nor has the tribe, at any rate in some places, the power to punish a crime committed within the "shpi" (house). When I was in Shala, at the priest's house in 1908, we heard two shots fired. Someone ran in to call the priest to a man who was dying; it was too late. In a dispute about the irrigation channels in the fields, a man had killed his own first cousin. Both were inmates of one large house. The crime excited genuine horror and was loudly discussed. Public opinion seemed to think something should be done—but what? It is the clear duty of a house to take blood as atonement for blood that has been taken. But the house, having already lost a man, cannot make matters any better by taking more of its own blood. This could not be expected; nor could any outsider interfere in what was a matter for the house lord. He could not be both lord of blood and gjaksur—could not owe himself blood. It was, in fact, an example of *patria potestas*. He decided to do nothing but hold a fine funeral to show his regret for the loss; and so sure was he that he was acting correctly that he sent a boy to the priest's

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- 682 house to borrow sugar for the funeral feast—a request which was refused.
 576 As I was the priest's guest, I could not attend the funeral; but it must have been interesting, for the murderer was one of the chief mourners—perhaps honestly so. My suggestion that he should be handed over
 [692] to the Turkish authorities in Scutari for punishment was not received at all well by anyone; and it was pointed out to me that had it not
 771 been the Will of God the man could not have died of only two bullets. Many men live with more in them. This curious case suggests that in earlier days the house lord may have had the power of life and death over his subjects.

MURDER OUTSIDE THE TRIBE

- 682 The tribe inflicts no punishment. The Turkish Government got its
 628 fine if it could. Fines, in fact, being part of the Government's revenue, no effort was made to stop blood-taking by it.
 The relatives of the murdered man take blood for him, of the family of the murderer if they can. An intertribal feud may become so intense that two whole tribes are "in blood." Peace can only be established by
 [727] a Council of Elders of both tribes. When made, it was sometimes strengthened by marrying the daughter of one party to a man of the
 [608] other. Or blood brotherhood may be sworn. The blood-gelt, fines, and the peace oath are as already described.

WOUNDING

- 683 A wound inflicted intentionally comes under the laws for blood. The house of the guilty man can be burnt and his goods can be seized (this in Dukagini), as in case of murder, if the elders examining the case think fit. He is liable to have his own blood taken by the injured man or his relatives. Blood of his son and brother may be taken (Dukagini).
 [693] Con-jurors up to twenty-four may be called, but according to the nature of the injury a smaller number may suffice. The fine paid is in proportion to the wound, and is decided by the elders. The price to be paid for a death—a fatal wound—is taken as standard, and the wound reckoned as one-half, quarter, tenth, etc., of a death price. It is, in fact, payment for the amount of blood lost.

In the case of a wound given accidentally, the house is not burnt, but the wound must be paid for. A man I knew, playing with a rifle, accidentally shot a woman through the foot and, unfortunately, made her lame for life. He had to pay fifteen napoleons to her husband (for damaging his property), and had to undertake to pay a further fifteen should the woman die at any future time as a result of lameness.

Birth, Marriage, and Death

Among the Dukagini I met several virgins, but all wore women's⁶⁸⁹ dress. As a rule, in all districts, the sworn virgin became servant to⁵⁶² one of the priests, and often joined the Third Order of St. Francis. Some became nuns or worked in one of the Scutari nunneries.

In the Maltsia e Madhe, in the case of a man with several daughters and no son, by his wish one could swear virginity and act as his son. He could bequeath to her his house and land for her lifetime, after^[428] which it reverted to the nearest male heir. Such a virgin had the right to sell her younger sisters. Such an one, aged about forty, I met in the Hoti tribe (Plate VIII).

In the Dukagini tribes, where the virgins do not wear men's dress, they cannot inherit and live on and work the land during their lifetime as in Maltsia e Madhe. The land goes to the next male heir, and he must pay the virgin yearly 300 okos of maize, 18 of rakija, and 30 of wine, and she can enforce payment by appeal to the Council of Elders.

One case only did I hear of a virgin breaking her vow. She had been for years servant to the priest of Baitza, and was accounted holy. On his death she was forty, and shocked the country-side by eloping^[687] with a Gusinje Moslem. No one dared follow to take vengeance in such a dangerous district, but it was piously hoped that she would pay the price of her crime in hell.

On the way from Berisha to Apripa we passed a huge rock. A virgin,⁶⁸⁹ so holy that she was almost a saint, had vowed to carry it to the church⁵⁶² at Berisha. She carried it safely a long way. Then in the forest she heard⁷⁷³ a shepherd fluting, and looked at him and admired him. Straightway she forgot the heavenly things on which she had fixed her mind; she dropped the rock, and when she tried to pick it up again found she had lost her miraculous strength. And there the rock stands.

In spite of many inquiries, I failed to hear of a case of a young man⁵⁸⁵ refusing to marry his betrothed bride. People were surprised I should ask and always replied: "But why should he? God has made all women alike." On the other hand, I met some cases of blind fury ending in⁵⁸³ blood-feud where a father had broken faith and sold his betrothed⁵⁷⁸ daughter to someone else. I argued with one man who was "in blood"⁵⁷⁷ that it was stupid to want to marry a girl he had never seen and who did not want him—people in other lands would laugh at him. He furiously replied that the girl had been paid for years ago by his father; the return of the bride-price made no difference; she was their property, and he would get her if he had to shoot her husband to do so. His honour and that of his whole house had been blackened. If people in other lands laughed at him it only showed they had no honour. ⁵⁸³

I asked often why the young men did not choose for themselves,⁵⁸⁷

Birth, Marriage, and Death

Sometimes the brother-in-law was unmarried, but this did not help matters, such marriages being prohibited by the Church. To stop the practice it was usual to excommunicate not only the couple but the whole "house" which permitted it, until the "levirate wife" was dismissed. I visited, at Apripa Gurit, a house of eighteen people thus under the ban. The son, a fine young fellow, had taken his elder brother's young widow to wife one month after her husband's death: this by tribe rule is the correct time. She had been married a very short time to her first husband and had not yet borne a child. The whole household was very uneasy about the excommunication, and offered the priest in my presence first thirty and then fifty guldens and pictures and candles for the church. But they stubbornly refused to put a stop to the "levirate marriage"; it would not be honourable. The young man himself was very certain of this. It was a duty he owed to his brother, and, no matter what the consequences, he would do it. He said they had found a girl, and arranged that he should marry her in a year's time. Till then he must cohabit with his sister-in-law. This he assured me very earnestly.

At Thethi Shala I found a case of a man who had thus taken his uncle's widow and his brother's widow. He then proposed taking a legitimate wife as well and had paid most of the purchase money. Only then did the bride's parents learn of the two other "wives." They said he should not have their daughter till the other two were dismissed. He replied she was paid for, and was his property and threatened vengeance.

The parents appealed to the padre, who sheltered them and the girl at the church-house, and succeeded in arranging a marriage for her with a man at a safe distance. The parents returned the first purchase money. "The aunt and sister-in-law" arrangement continued. The padre at Thethi had routed out all polygamous arrangements in his parish but two.

He said that the people had a deep-rooted belief that it was thus to take as wife the widow of uncle, cousin, or brother if she continued to live in the communal house. If this was not permitted she must be sent home to her people. They could see no alternative, and pleaded: "It is our old custom. Do not interfere with it."

In the wild and distant tribes of Nikaj, Toplana, and Berisha custom was extremely common among the Christians. Thus at Nikaj, out of three hundred houses about fifty had sister-in-law concubinage, and other houses similarly kept aunts, so a large proportion of the children were illegitimate in the eyes of the Church, but not of the people. The legitimate wives were very apt to bolt with another man, and there was much blood-feud. In Berisha I was told that the sister-in-

159 ing he had killed her, and overcome with grief and
 175 remorse, shut himself up in his most private apart-
 562 ments until he was informed by his physician that
 Emineh was not even wounded, but had merely fainted
 from emotion. His mind thus relieved, Ali shed
 tears, and, with all his tenderness for his favourite
 wife revived, proceeded to her apartment. Admittance
 being from fear refused him, he entered the chamber
 by force. The noise, however, and the sight of the
 tyrant, gave to the tender Emineh a shock which
 proved fatal, and she expired during the night in a
 state of delirium.

The death of Emineh was a terrible shock also to
 her murderer. Her memory perpetually haunted him,
 whether at the festal board or in the council chamber,
 and, above all, in the silent watches of the night. He
 feared to be left alone, and was frequently heard by
 his pages to start up, and exclaim: "Emineh! it is
 she!—it is she! Save me from her vengeance!"
 Years later, when the Dervish Sheikh, Youssouf, while
 boldly reproving the Vizier for his crimes and cruel-
 ties, pointed out from the window the tomb of the
 murdered Emineh, he was interrupted by Ali, who
 exclaimed with tears: "Stop, stop, my father! Thou
 hast named the name of Emineh; overwhelm me not
 with the weight of thy maledictions!"

628 An account of the Albanian women would hardly
 578 be complete without some mention of the terrible
 blood-feuds (*Ram de Ghiak*), which, though often
 originating in the most trifling causes, result in great
 loss of life, and are frequently handed down from
 generation to generation. Sometimes these feuds

exist between individuals or families only; at others, ⁶²⁸ whole villages, or clans, are concerned in them. In ⁵⁷⁸ carrying them on, however, certain traditional rules are punctiliously adhered to, and occasionally those concerned, finding the state of continual hostility irksome, agree to a *bessa*, or truce, for a fixed period. When entire clans take part in the feud, each keeps strictly to its own wells or fountains, its public ovens and its markets. Such dissensions, however, rarely interrupt the usual occupation of a district, the land being tilled and the flocks pastured as usual in the daytime, the combatants assembling for the fray at evening on the common or in the market-place of the town or village. When a few men have bitten the dust, the hostile parties withdraw, in order to bury the dead, and the battle is over for the time.

Though women are not the principals in these ⁶²⁸ vendetta, it is no uncommon thing for them to take ⁵⁶² part in the bloody frays to which they give rise, and ⁵⁷⁸ for which their custom of carrying arms makes them always ready. Mrs. Blunt describes¹ a combat of this description which took place in the neighbourhood of Uskup (Skopia), the cause of contention being merely a hare, to which two sportsmen laid equal claim. As neither would give in, it was decided that the case should be tried by combat on the village green. The duel, however, soon became a general *mêlée*, relatives and friends joining the principals, and women fighting by the side of their husbands and brothers. One girl of seventeen, the sister of one of the sportsmen, fought, it is said, with a desperation and success

¹ *The People of Turkey*, vol. i. p. 81.

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worthy of a better cause, and fourteen victims fell, thus perpetuating the feud among the survivors.

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On another occasion the breaking of a girl's pitcher at the fountain by two mischievous boys resulted in such a desperate contest between her friends and theirs that some sixty persons fell in the fight. It is said, however, that even on such occasions as these the men refrain, as far as possible, from striking or wounding the women, for the Albanian code of honour makes it impossible to attack a woman, whether armed or unarmed. The sacredness attached to their persons extends also to those whom they take under their protection. Escorted by a girl only, travellers may safely pass through the wildest parts of the country, and a man may cross, without fear, the lands of one with whom he is at feud, if he have the safe-conduct of a woman belonging to his enemy's family.

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To such an extent is respect for women carried by the Albanians, that it is contrary to their notions of propriety ever to make women the subject of jokes or humorous stories. Insult or annoyance offered to a girl, or carrying off one without the consent of her parents, almost invariably results in bitter feuds between families, or fierce battles between tribes. As with most mountain people, the moral code is with the Skipetars exceedingly strict. Among many of the tribes any lapse from virtue on the part of a woman is punished with death, a subsequent marriage not being allowed to condone the fault. The penalty of adultery is of equally Draconic severity. The unfaithful wife is placed up to her shoulders in a pit, and

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drop falling from a rock, the delicate sound of ○○○
our breathing and of the blood in our ears.

"Which proves nothing, of course. The sound wasn't in the right direction; the echoes didn't work," said Alex.

"Yes," I said. "But I wish they had. It would have given us such delightfully shivery sensations."

So we came up out of the wood,¹ and over the next mountain, and there on a slope, where the dead grass was splotched with patches of rotting snow and the soft earth trodden by the sharp hoofs of goats, we came back with a jolt to problems of unquestioned reality. For we met a⁴²³ woman, herding the goats, who believes in⁵⁷⁸ private property.

She was a tall, dark-eyed woman, handsome, but not beautiful. Her face, as we say, was full of character; and there was independence, even a shade of defiance, in her bearing as she stood watching us approach, her chin up, her eyes cool and steady, one hand grasping a peeled branch as a staff, her ragged skirt strained against her by the wind that blew down from the mountain pass. Her thick, dark hair hung forward^[77] over her shoulders in two braids, and from each dangled a charm of bright blue beads, defense against any demon she might meet in the mountains.

"Long life to you!" she said.

"And to you long life!" we replied, and, seeing her glance fall covetously on my cigarette—only

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423 the swiftest flicker of a glance, it was—I offered
578 her one. She took it, thanked me, lighted it from mine.

“A bold woman,” said Perolli.

“Why?”

[562] “In these mountains¹ the women smoke, but
[576] not before men; that is a man’s privilege, and it is unwomanly to smoke in their presence. Are you a woman?” he asked her, in Albanian.

“A woman of Pultit, married in Shala. A widow with two children, demanding justice from my tribe,” she said.

I looked about. There was nothing but snow and wet earth to sit on. Well, she must have been standing for hours, watching the goats. I leaned on my staff. “What justice?” said I.

She told us with a calm precision; none of her people’s rhetorical flourishes. Even through the barrier of language I could see that she was stating her case as a lawyer might who was not addressing a jury.

She had been married five years; she was twenty-one years old. She had two children—boys. While she was married her husband had built a house. It was a large house; two rooms. She had helped her husband build that house. With her own hands she had laid the slate on the roof. She liked that house. She had lived in it four years. Now her husband had been killed by the Serbs and she wanted to keep that house. She wanted to live in it, alone, with her two children.

¹[Albanian mountains-- [98] Analyst]

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"But it is impossible!" said Perolli. "A large⁴²³ house, with two rooms, for one woman?"⁵⁷⁸

By the Virgin Mary, she said, yes! She wanted that house; it was her house. She was going to have that house. She was not going to stop talking till she got that house.

"By Jove! I like her spirit!" said Frances. The woman stood looking from one to the other of us, defiant, superb.

"Well, but what's become of the house?" Alex demanded.

Her husband's brother, head of the family now, had taken it. He was living in it with his wife and children and brothers and cousins and—I forget exactly; seventeen of them in all. The family, which comprised all the village at the foot of the slope on which we stood, had decided that the house should be used for them. She and her children could live with them. But she would not do it. She wanted that house all for herself; she said again that it was her house. Until she got that house nothing would content her or keep her silent. Her sons she had sent to the priest's house in Plani—to the same "macaroni" who had refused us shelter. He had taken them in and promised to educate them for the priesthood. For herself, she remained in this village, clamoring for that house. If she got it before her sons were grown and married she would bring them back to live with her. She might do so, even when they were married. That did not matter; what she wanted was the house, her house, all for herself.

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423 "Well," said Perolli, "I pity the chiefs of that
572 village."

"But where do you suppose she got the idea?"

"Heavens knows. Who can tell what women will think of?" said Perolli.

We left her standing on the cliff edge, still superb and still defiant, the cigarette in her hand and the blue beads twinkling at the ends of her braids. A bright scarlet handkerchief was twisted around her head, and her wide belt, thickly studded with silver nails, shone like armor. A picture of revolt, and I thought what a catastrophe she must be in the peaceful village to which, clinging and dropping from boulder to boulder, we were descending.

"Will we see her again?" I asked.

"Oh, she'll probably drop in during the evening. She looks like a woman who would," said Perolli.

361 The village was perhaps fifteen houses, clustered on flat land at the foot of the cliffs. Beyond it, a creamy blue flood swollen by the rains, the Lumi Shala ran straight between the mountain
[32] ranges. A score of little streams, stone walled and crossed by tiny stone bridges, ran through the village, and all the land on which it stood was cut into odd-shaped pieces by many stone fences and raised channels of stone for irrigation water. Dropping down into that village was rather like being a very small gnat descending on a piece of half-made honeycomb.

000 All the earth was sodden with water; we sank

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574 to help his wife cook the dinner; there was a built-up place of stone outside where the cooking fire was made. All this time we had been talking, making the courteous speeches that accompany coffee drinking, and exchanging cigarettes.

One of the empty cigarette boxes—the little, ten-cigarette, tin-foil-lined ones—I handed to a little boy, perhaps four years old. He took it gravely, thanking me like a man, and retired to look at it. But hardly had he opened the flap when I saw the hand of a chief come over the boy's shoulder and quietly take the box. The boy gave it up, not even a shade of discontent on his face, and it passed slowly from hand to hand, was inspected, marveled at, discussed. The cunningness of the folding, the beautiful design of printing and picture, the delicacy of the tissue paper that had been around the cigarettes, the pliability of the tin foil, of metal, and yet so thin, engrossed them all. When they had satisfied their curiosity and admiration, it went back to the boy, who took it with his hand on his heart, bowed, and sat for a long time looking at it.

“Have you ever seen such perfect courtesy?” said, I, marveling. “And from such a baby!”

Perolli looked at me in amazement. “Why, what's strange about it?” he asked.

423 Undoubtedly we were among the most cour-
578 teous people in the world, I thought, but the next moment that idea was completely upset,

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for out of the darkness walked that rebel woman who believes in private property. 423
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She came quite calmly into the circle of the firelight, her beautiful hands low on her thighs, below the wide, silver-shining marriage belt, the blue beads twinkling at the ends of the long black braids of her hair, her chin up, and a light of battle in her eyes.

"May you live long!" said she to the circle, and, "To you long life!" we responded. But the chiefs looked at her sidewise from narrowed eyes and then again at the fire, and hostility came from them like a chill air. The children looked at her with wide, attentive eyes, chins on their hands; the sprawling, graceful, handsome youths seemed amused. Beyond the firelight, the women of the household went about their tasks; one came in and lowered from her shoulders a large, kidney-shaped wooden keg of water.

"When am I going to get my house?" said the woman. She stood there superb, holding that question like a bone above a mob of starving dogs, and they rose at it.

I have never seen such pandemonium. Three chiefs spoke at once, snarling; they were on their feet; all the men were on their feet; it was like a picture by Jan Steen changed into the wildest of futurist canvases. I expected them to fly at one another's throats, after the words that they hurled at one another like spears. I expected them to strike the woman, so violently they thrust their faces close to hers, clenching quiver-

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423 ing fists on the hilts of the knives in their sashes.
578 She stamped her foot; her lips curled back like a dog's from her fine, gleaming teeth, and she stood her ground, flashing back at them words that seemed poisoned by the venom in her eyes. "My house!" she repeated, and, "I want my house!" These words, the only ones I recognized, were like a motif in the clamor; Rexh and Perolli were both too much absorbed to translate, and we added to the turmoil by frantic appeals to them.

Then, suddenly as the calm after an explosion, they were all quiet. They sat down; they rolled cigarettes; the coffee maker picked up his flung-away pot and went on making coffee. Only the eyes of the chiefs were still cold and bitter, and the woman, though silent, was not at all defeated. There was a pause.

"Ask them what she wants," said I, quickly, to Perolli.

"Who can say what the avalanche desires?" replied the chief, contemptuously. "She would break our village into pieces. She has no respect for wisdom or custom. She says that a house is her house; she is a widow with two sons, and she demands the house in which she lived with her husband. She wishes to take a house from the tribe and keep it for herself. Have the mountains seen such a thing since a hundred hundred years before the Turks came? She is *gogoli*."¹

"I helped to build that house," said the woman.

¹ Gogoli—bewitched by a demon of the mountains; insane.

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423 "With my own hands I laid the roof upon it.
578 It is my house. I will not give up my house."

Frances and I hugged each other in silent convulsions of delight. My pen spilled ink on my excited hands as I tried to capture their words in shorthand. I was seeing, actually seeing with my own eyes, the invention of private property!

"What are they going to do about it?"

The question was not too tactful, nor too happily received, but they answered it. "They have already called a council of the whole village four [627] times," said Perolli. "They will do nothing about it. ¹/_^ Houses belong to the tribe. It is a large house, and the people have decided that her dead husband's brother shall have it for his household. She has been offered a place in it. If she does not want that, she can live wherever she likes in the tribe. No one will refuse shelter or food to her and her children. She has friends with whom she can live, since she quarrels with her husband's brother. All this is absurd, and they will not call another council to satisfy a foolish woman."

"I want my house," said the woman.

Then the oldest man—one of the little boys was playing with the silver chains around his neck, and another hung heavily against his shoulder, but his dignity was undisturbed and he was obviously chief of the chiefs—appealed to me.

609 "In your country, what would you do with
423 such a woman?" And I perceived that I was

* [For data on this gnie - [107] Vance, see cat. 116,
pp. 97-101, 104-107 -- Analyst]

POSTSCRIPT

771 of the cross, and hears in his forests the voices
184 of the ora. This vague religion is unconscious.

The Albanian himself does not recognize it, but it is the resisting subsoil which has prevented [582] acknowledged religions from taking deep root.

Families of all religions freely intermarry;

[292] Mohammedan women are unveiled, or Catholic women veiled, according to the fashion of their town; in the mountains neither are veiled. In Guri-Bardhe, a village of the Mati known as being fanatically Mohammedan, the women were quite willing to pose for photographs, and Limoni, the chief, was defying the local *hodji* by demanding a modern school; the *hodji* taught the children nothing worth while, he said. In the spring [798] religious festivals—the two Easters and the fast of Ramazan—all Albanians in Tirana took part, and Mohammedan fezzes were thick in the midnight processions carrying Easter candles.

[186] There has never been friction along the frontiers of the three religions. All Albanians united to resist the Romanizing and Germanizing influence of Catholicism, the attempt of Shiek ul Islam to cripple the Albanian language by a Turkish alphabet (a revolution was fought, and won, for the Latin alphabet in 1910), and the Hellenizing propaganda of certain Orthodox Churchmen.

184 But there is a real division in Albania. It lies
578 between the Toshks, or southerners, and the Ghegs, who are the mountaineers. Men who have held their mountain fastnesses and main-

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tained their independence for six centuries within 184
the Turkish Empire look with distrust and con-578
tempt on the Toshks whose valleys have been
flooded by every wave of invaders. The Toshks,
who are the educated men of Albania, and the
travelers, are equally contemptuous of the
Ghegs, ignorant men unable to read or write.
Nor do the Toshks admit that they cannot fight
as well as the Ghegs. It was the Toshks in Sicily
who fought with Garibaldi, the Toshks of Egypt
who fought with Mehmet Ali; the Albanian sol-
diers in Russia and Rumania and Turkey are
Toshk; the 50,000 Albanians in the United
States are Toshk, and fought well with the
Americans in France. Hundreds of them have
returned to spread American ideas through the
south; there are Toshk villages in which Ameri-
can English is spoken by nearly every child.
Men from these villagers led the forces that
drove the Italians from Valona in 1920. Indeed,
say the Toshks, they can fight as well as Ghegs.
But it is not fighting that Albania needs.

One of the errors about Albania, to which I 133
fear my descriptions may contribute is the
belief that the country is entirely mountainous.
This is true of the northern part, adjoining
Montenegro. Farther south the ranges are like
the partitions in a house; steep, high, almost
impassable, they surround valleys and plateaus
of rich level land, much of it irrigated. The 132
climate of the valleys is semitropical; rice, cot-241
ton, tobacco, citrus fruits, figs, and pomegranates

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She had great natural wealth and no debts, 175
but she had no currency of her own, no banks, 727
no credit system. She had hides, wool, and olive
oil to export, but all her frontiers were closed
by enemies. She had minerals, forests, water
power, oil, harbors, but no machines of any kind,
no trained men, no commercial organization.
She had the strongest men, the bravest fighters,
the most indomitable national spirit in Europe,
but few of her people could read or write. Cer-
tainly more than half the population was ill from
malnutrition and malaria, and she had probably
the highest infantile mortality rate in Europe.

This was the new Albania which must some-
how maintain itself. And if the curtain of silence
behind which this Balkan drama is played were
a stone wall shutting out her neighbors, the situ-
ation would not be so difficult. But Italy—
promised southern Albania by the secret Treaty
of London in 1915 which induced her to join the
Allies against Germany, and cheated of her pay-
ment—has authority from the League of Nations
to occupy Albania again if the Albanians fail to
maintain a stable government. Serbia is still
intriguing to push farther south and west the
boundary lines not yet entirely fixed by the
League of Nations.

There were other difficulties. Because the 175
Toshks are the Albanians who can read and 727
write, the weak provisional government¹ was 578
Toshk. Around the fires in their mountain
houses, the Ghegs were saying that only cow-

POSTSCRIPT

175 ardly Toshks would allow free Albania to bow
727 to a League of Nations—a League of the very
518 Powers who were her enemies. The Ghegs, they
● said, were no such shameful trucklers. And
every fire had its refugee guests who had fled
from burning villages, leaving terror and death
behind them. These refugees cried to their
brother Ghegs for vengeance. Did the Ghegs
call themselves men and Albanians? they de-
manded. “Our teeth in the throats of the
Serbs!” the Ghegs replied.

Meanwhile in Tirana the Toshks were talking
softly of patience, and of more patience, of wait-
ing month after month for a commission and yet
another commission from the League of Nations.
The Toshks—with that threat of Italian invasion
over them—were demanding peace, peace at any
cost. Albania must wait for the League of
Nations to fix the boundaries, must acquiesce in
any boundaries fixed, must be quiet, must wait.

While they waited, the people starved. Prices
in Albania are higher than in the United States
—higher in dollars. The homespun garments
have worn out; there is nothing to replace them.
Fields have been devastated, and no men left
alive to till them. Flocks have disappeared,
horses and mules are gone. And as the boun-
daries have been fixed, mile by mile upon a map,
Dibra and Mati have lost their market cities,
Dukaghini and Merdite have lost their grazing
lands, the tribes of Hoti and Gruda and Castrati
have been cut in two. Still, the Albanian gov-

POSTSCRIPT

ernment spoke of peace, demanded peace, and—¹⁷⁵
determined to have peace—set about disarming ⁷²⁷
the Ghegs in the very face of their enemies. ⁵⁷⁸

This was the Albania into whose capital I ¹⁰⁰⁰
blithely rode, in the rattling little Ford, on that
spring night of 1922. I pass over all the minor
political disputes, the ambitions of selfish men,
the mistakes of foolish ones, the bitter rivalry
between Elbassan, to the south, Scutari, to the
north, and Tirana, in the center, for the honor
and profit of being Albania's capital. Tirana ³⁶¹
was, tentatively, the capital; made so because
it was everywhere conceded to be the least pro-
gressive, the most hopelessly Mohammedan, the
most dangerously un-Albanian city in the coun-
try. The government had made Tirana the
capital for the same reason that the teacher puts
the worst boy of the class in the front seat. But
this was no solace to Scutari or Elbassan.

Tirana, the white, low town, drowsed in the
sun; ⁷water rippled in the gutters of the winding,
walled streets; donkeys laden with cedar boughs,
the brooms of Tirana, carefully picked their foot-
ing on the uneven cobbles; women with gayly
painted cradles on their backs trudged behind
the donkeys. Men in rags of their homespun
white garments and Scanderbeg jackets and col-
ored sashes sat all day on the low walls around
the mosques. The fez makers, amid their piles
of raw wool and mixing bowls and heating irons,
were talking politics, and so were the men in the
street of the coppersmiths, which is musical from

⁷[In spring 1922 [301] -- Analyst]

Introduction

13

comed Turkish protection against the Slavs and Greeks who threatened them on every side. It resulted rather from the jealousies of the Powers; and it was their representatives who determined the territories of the new state with such singular disregard for economic and ethnological considerations that they left as many Albanians outside the boundaries of Albania as within them. 642

The total number of Albanians has been generally computed at some two millions. Of these, upwards of one million lived within the frontiers which were proposed by the Ambassadors' Conference in 1913, ratified in 1926, and once more restored in 1945. Of the remainder, more than six hundred thousand inhabited the Kossovo, while the others were scattered in Montenegro, Macedonia, and Epirus. The amputation of the Kossovo was a heavy loss to the new state; for the region was the natural granary of the northern provinces, and the standard of living of the Ghegs rose or fell according as they were allowed or denied free access to it. [162]

The economic and social structure of the Ghegs, or Northern Albanians, was one of tribal anarchy, save in the coastal plain and the Kossovo, where there were feudal estates. Islam and Roman Catholicism were the accepted religions: the Moslems inhabiting Central and North-eastern Albania with the Kossovo, the Catholics Mirdita and the inaccessible ranges of the north-west. A way of life near to the tribal system of the Ghegs still survived in the mountains of Southern Albania, but the Tosk tribes had never wholly recovered from the repressions of Ali the Lion and had increasingly disintegrated into communities of landowning peasants. The broad plains of the South, however, remained divided into feudal estates, owned by an Ottomanised ruling class and worked in part by an Orthodox Christian peasantry. Thus, while the distinction between Moslems and Catholics was one of geography and history, the Catholics being those Albanians whom the Turks had never subdued, that between Moslems and Orthodox was one rather of class and of cash. 184 621

It was scarcely to be expected that a conference of ambassadors would quickly set up a strong state among a people divided 642 ●

578 by geography, dialect, religion, and tradition, as well as by the
642 new frontiers assigned to them. Nor indeed were the Powers conspicuous by their efforts to achieve Albanian unity. The German Prince of Wied, whom they chose as head of the new state, arrived in Durazzo in March 1914, with no previous experience of the Balkans and little enough of fallen human nature. He found his principality torn between three armed factions, each supported by foreign gold and inspired by the personal ambition of their leaders. These were Prenk Bib Doda Pasha, hereditary Captain of the Catholic Mirdita; Essad Pasha Toptani, a former general of the Turkish army and the most powerful chief in Central Albania; and Ismail Kemal Vlora, a cousin of the Grand Vizier Ferid Pasha and the chief man among the Tosks. On his arrival the Prince invited these warlike men to dinner, and, in the course of conversation, Prenk Bib Doda turned to him and remarked:

"If Albania is to be ruled peacefully, three persons ought to be hanged: Ismail Kemal, Essad Pasha, and myself! If all three of us were dead Albania would fare much better!"

Seldom in history has such disinterested advice been tendered by a subject to his sovereign. Prince William, however, failed to act upon it and within six months he was driven from his throne, never to return, by the bashi-bazouks of Essad Pasha and Ismail Kemal.

In the years of the first World War and of its aftermath, Prenk and Ismail Kemal intrigued and counter-intrigued with the agents of the Powers whose armies marched and counter-marched across Albania. But they were not destined to see the final settlement: Ismail Kemal died in Italy in 1918, apparently of natural causes, while Prenk and Essad were both murdered in 1920 at the instigation of the Italian Government; the latter while attending the Peace Conference in Paris. In Albania strife and confusion persisted for a time; but, with the passing of the old leaders and in face of the determination of Italy, Yugoslavia, and Greece to deny to each other the control of the Straits of Otranto, the internal political situation slowly crystallised into a recognisable form.

ooo A new generation of political leaders now came forward,

SEPARATION OF BROTHERS

71

they reminded these onlookers how everything had been divided. 428
 Then if disputes arose later between the brothers these could bear 574
 witness to the division. No documents were drawn up, the oral 723
 testimony of the witnesses in general, and in particular the mute
 testimony of the boundary stones, was enough for the unwritten
 law. Where a dead father had held title-deeds, these were distrib-
 uted appropriately among the brothers, but such cases were few. 578

Too often, the division was followed there and then by disputes. 428
 Most frequently they were about the land and due to greed, for
 each brother knew that on the portion allotted to him on that day
 he and perhaps unborn generations of his descendants must live,
 and he naturally tried to make it as large as possible. Sometimes
 a brother was rightly disgruntled. Dividers were human enough
 to make mistakes; an eldest brother sometimes tried to cheat when
 dividing; at times even an elder showed favouritism. In such
 cases the division was revised, an elder dividing instead of the
 eldest brother or a second elder instead of the first, on the usual
 'elder after elder' basis. Or instead of having one elder between
 them the brothers might each put in one for himself; in this case
 they must all stand aside and leave the elders to fight things out.

Not infrequently one brother was simply cantankerous. Then 623
 the easiest way for the elders to make him see reason was to exercise 574
 their right to have all their meals at the family's expense until their 428
 work was done. They might go away, leaving the division incom-
 plete and refusing to return until he bent his stubborn neck and in
 person fetched them back with promises to be good. This meant
 an extra meal, an expense that even the trouble-maker deplored in
 his heart, if not openly. As it was, surely unfairly, shared by the
 reasonable brothers these were from the first careful to do nothing
 to excite the other further. There was no difficulty about extracting
 this meal, as the commonest source of trouble, the land, was
 always divided before the livestock.

A story of Turkish times from Godollesh shows the elders
 taking cruder but no less effective steps to settle matters. A family
 at the top of the village refused to accept the division they proposed.
 'Where is your best ram?' asked the elders the first day, and ate the
 animal. 'Where is the pot of *bekmës* (boiled grape juice)?' they
 asked the second day, and emptied this. 'Where is the butter jar?'
 they asked the third day, and devoured that. The brothers then
 came to their senses and allowed the suggested division to proceed.
 [concerning the division of land at the time of
 separation of brothers - Analyst]

regulation width from the boundary. If this involved him in more expense it also saved him and his descendants from ever quarrelling about the wall. It also gave his dog room enough to run round his house at night, a not unimportant point. But even a brother could not be allowed to erect a building against his neighbour's wall. The risk from the drips of rain from it was too serious.

If one neighbour wished to fence or wall in his field he did no wrong, strictly speaking, by building the barrier along the middle of the grass-grown footpath along the boundary between fields, and so on the very boundary line. But this caused so many quarrels that in Mirditë and the Malësi e Madhe the law bade him leave the width of his barrier free between its outer base and the boundary, just as he must do when building a wall across his courtyard. In its wisdom the law was providing for the future.

Theoretically, a man could not only build his fence or wall along a boundary line, but could also ask his neighbour to make half of it. In practice, however, the neighbour might be too lazy or might say he was too poor or too ill to do his bit. In Kastrat¹ he could be fined 250 grosh and three rams for his unneighbourliness, and this possibility sometimes drove him to action. In the ingenious Malësi e Madhe the first man might in malice run up a fence parallel to the boundary but with an opening sixteen spans (3·20 metres) wide at either end. This ensured that his animals strayed through the opening on to his bad neighbour's field and ate it up. To give the neighbour no chance to make him move his fence he ran it up four spans, half the width of the horse-track, from the boundary. Most men, however, preferred to make the whole fence themselves, constructing it at least half the width of a footpath from the boundary. If two neighbours made half the fence each, but one made his half badly, this man was at fault—whether his sheep strayed into the good fencer's field or the good fencer's into his. The loss always fell on him; in the first case he had to compensate his neighbour, and in the second he had no right to be compensated for the damage done by the animals.

Sometimes a man wished to fence in a field which was bounded by a road. In Krasniqë and some other hilly districts he had to leave a strip of his land as well to allow for the fence slipping down on to the road, an ever likely possibility.

Most hedges of dead thorn were directly over the boundary line,

¹ See Appendix, Document V, § 11, p. 264.

554 of aghas. The title of agha was a courtesy title bestowed by the
 576 populace. By special provision of the Turkish Government there
 had been hereditary aghas since the Turkish conquest at Botush
 in Yugoslav Kosovë; these, says their representative in Albania,
 took precedence of all bajraktars in Albania and Kosovë.

- 576 Given the pride of a bajraktar in his standard and of a 'first
 658 family' in its descent, a clash between the two was not uncommon.
 When this took the form of an ordinary isolated quarrel, elders
 were called in from another tribe to judge between the disputants.
 Their own tribe did not venture to try the issue, knowing that it
 might suffer, as outside elders could not do, for an unwelcome
 judgement. If the elders failed to effect a settlement, shooting
 began between the parties, both bajraktar and 'first family' being
 followed by his own kin. A man related to both followed the one
 to whom he was more nearly related; this at least in theory. In
 practice they often showed a naive sense of which side their bread
 was buttered and joined the disputant with the stronger following.

628 Sometimes a long struggle for precedence developed between
 662 'first family' tenacious of its ancient privileges and an ambitious
 578 bajraktar. In Lurë, for instance, both the Catholic Zef Doçi of
 Lurë e Vjetër (Old Lurë) and the Mohammedan Ibrahim Gjoçi of
 Kreje had long been rivals of the Mohammedan bajraktar Hakik
 Aliu Meta. In 1926 Gjoçi had the largest following, because he
 maintained the tribe with surpassing generosity. Within a decade
 he ate himself out of house and home, and then lost nearly all his
 power, retaining only the tribesmen's affection and respect for his
 past benefits. He therefore ceased to hamper the ambitions of the
 bajraktar. Zef Doçi, the 'first family' in the whole tribe, was a more
 obstinate rival, as his power rested less on his lavish doles than on
 his descent and personal wisdom. Ancestor after ancestor had been
 'captains' in Turkish times, whereas Gjoçi and Meta had never
 been 'captains' till created by King Zog. The bajraktar began by
 undermining Doçi's position with traditional doles. He sent sheep
 to the poor at every festival and went guarantee for them in the
 shops during crises such as weddings and burials. 'So they all
 follow me now', he told the visitor with disarming simplicity. He
 had resorted to direct action, seizing every chance to kill off the
 guns in Doçi's family. In 1933 some brigands, who had killed one
 of Llesh Doçi's men, were harboured in a mountain sheepfold by
 the bajraktar's shepherds. Together with Zef and other relatives,

Llesh ambushed the brigands and wounded one. As one of his men⁶²⁸ was killed, the two sides were 'one and one', equalized, and could⁵⁷⁸ have made peace. But the opportunity was too good for the⁶⁶² bajraktar to miss. By the law of the mountains Llesh should not have attacked the sheepfold until he had asked the bajraktar to withdraw his protection from the brigands and had met with a refusal. So the bajraktar vowed he would not make peace but would have Doçi's blood for the 'injury'. Soon he learned that Zef Doçi and all his male relatives were at a wedding in a poor man's house. Under cover of darkness his followers crept up to the house and shooting through the windows killed two and wounded four of the wedding guests. A year later the bajraktar managed to have a third man from Zef's family killed, leaving Zef almost alone.

In his charities this bajraktar of Lurë took no account of the⁶⁶² recipient's religion, helping a Catholic as readily as one of his fellow Mohammedans. If he discriminated between the two he would gain nothing from the Albanian government, which ignored religious differences. In Turkish times discrimination in favour of Mohammedans would have furthered his designs by winning approval from the Turkish government. He found, however, that the proved loyalty of his family to King Zog's stood him in even better stead. A marriage had also proved a useful asset. Metë Hoti, the best shot in Lurë, would have been expected to join Zef Doçi, because his mortal enemy, Dalip Kaci, followed Zef's enemy, the bajraktar. Unfortunately for Zef, Metë had a sister married to one of the bajraktar's household. Since joining Zef meant shooting at the bajraktar's men, Metë feared to have the blood of his nephews on his hands and continued reluctantly, side by side with his mortal enemy, to follow the bajraktar.

The result of the struggle can be shown by the numbers of the^[701] levies raised by the three captains for the Albanian government in 1926, 1933 and 1935 respectively. They were as follows:

	1926	1933	1935
Zef Doçi	150	50	23
Ibrahim Gjoçi	300	40	32
Bajraktar	4	300	400

It would have been interesting to revisit Lurë to see the effect⁰⁰⁰ on the position established by the Italian occupation. The bajraktar,

Yugoslavia EF1
Albania EG1

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Settlements of the Vlahs are located in steep hillsides far away from the highways. The houses are large, have a number of rooms, and are two-story structures. They are rectangular and of stone; the higher the altitude the thicker the walls become. Windows are not very large, but all two-story buildings have a balcony on the second floor. When they consist of only one story the veranda is lacking (Capidan, 1941: 29-30). The floor plan of both stories consists of a central hall with side rooms. In winter the ground floor is used for habitation, in summer the upper story, although in large families both floors are occupied in summer and winter. Most daily activities take place in the hall of the ground floor. The side rooms there are generally for storage, and most of the sleeping rooms are on the top floor. One or two guest rooms may be present. (Capidan, 1941: 29-30).

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Farm Buildings. In the yard one finds the košara, a long rectangular building made of wicker with a straw roof, used for sheep in winter. The circular chicken coop is likewise of wicker (fig. 38). The most important structure is the plennja, which is located close to the threshing floor and serves for the storage of straw and fodder. Poorer ones are made of wattle and daub and covered with straw; however, they are generally of the same construction as the house. They are one-story buildings and are found in all villages of southern Macedonia. While they may be located in the yard they usually form a group away from the houses (Milojević, 1921: 87-88).

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Buildings Outside the Village. In the mountains one finds groups of up to twenty shepherds' huts that form a hamlet, looking like beehives from afar. They have a diameter of 5-6 meters and are not higher than 3 meters. They are constructed of woven twigs or straw and plastered with mud. The walls are about 10-15 centimeters thick. The upper part of the "bee-hive" has a roof consisting of about 5-7 rows of straw which merge with the walls. In the interior one finds a fireplace with a cauldron hanging over it, and a loom (Capidan, 1941: 31-32).

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In addition to these huts the Vlah shepherds have portable tents. The tent is made by spreading a cloth of woven goat hair, 4-5 meters long and 2-3 meters wide, over a wooden frame. One of the triangular entrances remains open while the other is closed by woven cloth (Capidan, 1941: 32-33).

ALBANIA

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Albania consists largely of rugged, barren mountains, bordered by a fairly wide coastal plain. Most of the available data deal with the mountain regions of northern Albania. This is an area of intensive feuding, where, as among the Spašić clan, up to 32% of mortalities are the result of feuds (Nopcea, 1925: 52). This internecine warfare is clearly reflected in the preference for stone

ALBANIA EGJ

buildings, fortress-like structure and small windows. House types thus serve as a clear index to the amount of feuding in any particular area. Where veranda houses prevail, conditions are fairly peaceful. This factor explains the almost mutually exclusive distribution of kulas and veranda houses in mountain areas, although how far this is borne out in lowland areas, I am unable to say.

Location and Types of Settlements. In the mountain regions west of Lake Scutari to Lake Ohrid one finds single farmsteads comprising one or two buildings. Only in the plains and at the foot of the mountains does one find Cvijic's Ibar type of settlements (Nopcea, 1925: 6). This type is characterized by widely spaced, dense hamlets (Cvijic, 1918: 219). In southern Albania the village form is variable but agglomerated villages with crooked roads predominate (Cvijic, 1925: 224, Map IV).

House Types. Buildings of wickerwork and plaster are found only in the coastal plains, and even there they are rare (fig. 47). In the extreme north one finds houses of boards or logs. Most buildings are of stone; one finds some use of dry masonry, but generally mortar is used. Stone is preferred because it gives protection from fire and gunshot. In south and central Albania bond timbers are inserted into the stone walls; this pattern is lacking in northern Albania. The combination of stone foundation and wooden second story, found in Serbia, Bosnia, Rumania and Siebenburgen is missing in Albania (Nopcea, 1925: 30).

Roofing may be of straw, shingles, slate, stone slabs or tiles. The simplest buildings in the mountains have roofs of corn stalks. Tiles are common both in the coastal and mountain regions. Roofing of stone slabs is widely distributed; most dairy houses in the high mountains are covered in this manner (Nopcea, 1925: 31-32). High shingled roofs, common in Bosnia and eastern Montenegro, are found only in the extreme north of Albania. Gabled roofs predominate north of the Drin River; south of it one finds hipped roofs. Widely projecting eaves are absent. The kulas may have low pyramidal roofs and occasionally deck roofs. In general, roofs tend to be flat. When the roof is hipped, the chimney tends to be in the center of the short side (Nopcea, 1925: 31-32). Chimneys are not typical.

The simplest type of house is the one-room log house with a low roof of short thick shingles. Cracks in the wall are stuffed with moss; windows are lacking, and light enters through the open door and openings in the roof. The open fireplace has hung over it a deflector of boards plastered with mud; smoke escapes through the roof (Nopcea, 1925: 33).

In the coastal regions of northern Albania, reed is abundant and walls are made of woven reeds. The roof is likewise of reeds. These buildings are generally plastered on the outside. Occasionally the roof is of unfired bricks (Nopcea, 1925: 35).

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